

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 SAJ-01 MC-02 AID-05 IGA-01 EB-07 /077 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6633

INFO CINCPAC

COMUSMACTHAI

S E C R E T BANGKOK 12589

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS

SUBJECT: US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND

1. DURING HIS JUNE 27 MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT WE ARE ABOUT TO COMPLETE THE PRESENT PHASE OF OUR US MILITARY WITHDRAWALS AND WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING HOW THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD PROPOSE TO PROCEED. KHUKRIT FINESSED THIS QUESTION, NOTING THAT THIS WAS A COMPLICATED ISSUE WHICH WOULD REQUIRE FURTHER DISCUSSION.

2. HE USED THIS, HOWEVER, AS ANOTHER PEG TO DESCRIBE THAILAND'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ITS NEW NEIGHBORS. KHUKRIT SAID THAILAND NOW HAS A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL TALK WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AND TRY TO DO THINGS THE RIGHT WAY. AT THE SAME TIME, KHUKRIT SAID HE HAS A REALISTIC APPRECIATION OF THE THREAT THAILAND FACES. THAILAND MUST BE PREPARED TO DEFEND ITSELF. WE WILL "SMILE ON THE OUTSIDE" BUT MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN OUR DEFENSES.

3. IN THIS CONNECTION, KHUKRIT SAID HE VERY MUCH HOPED WE WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC AID IN ORDER TO HELP MAKE THAILAND STRONG. ON THE MILITARY SIDE, HE HOPED WE WOULD PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND ALSO SELL MILITARY EQUIPMENT ON "FRIENDLY TERMS"

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SO THE THAI WILL HAVE WHAT THEY REQUIRE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES.

HE SAID THAILAND REGARDED THE US AS A LONGSTANDING FRIEND -
ONE WHO HAS NEVER HARMED THAILAND'S INTERESTS.

4. THE AMBASSADOR RETURNED TO THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWALS AND
OBSERVED THAT THE US WAS WELL AWARE OF THE RTG POSITION BUT
THAT A FURTHER DISCREET EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WAS DESIRABLE. WE
WERE NOT CLEAR, FOR EXAMPLE, WHAT WAS INCLUDED IN THE TERM QTE
FORCES UNQTE. THERE WERE VARIOUS FACILITIES THAT MIGHT WELL
NOT BE VIEWED UNDER THIS HEADING.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER AGREED THAT THESE MATTERS SHOULD BE WORKED
OUT. HE APPEARED TO HAVE GIVEN THIS QUESTION LITTLE THOUGHT
AND RETURNED TO THE THEME OF THAILAND BEING IN A POSITION TO
DEFEND ITSELF.

WHITEHOUSE

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